Amendments to the Specification:

Please delete the section beginning at page 1, line 1 and ending at page 1, line 2, entitled "Express Mail mailing label number: EL153099526US."

Please replace the paragraph (or section) beginning at page 6, line 1, with the following redlined paragraph (or section):

A rebate on an item is generally offered based on predictions of the market price for the item, and an anticipated rate of redemption of the rebate. In the event that either of the foregoing predictions is grossly off, the rebate issuer can be left with substantial outstanding liability. For example, assume that a tomato-paste manufacturer -- on the basis of a forecast that the coming season's tomato harvest will be average and an anticipation that sales of tomato paste will follow previous industry trends -- issues a coupon offering a 25 cent rebate on each 16 ~~once~~ ounce can of tomato paste. Next assume that, contrary to expectations, the season's tomato harvest far exceeds expectations, resulting in a depression of tomato prices such that consumer redemption of the 25 cent rebate per can of tomato paste results in a loss to the tomato-paste manufacturer. Alternatively, or in addition to the foregoing, assume that the rates of redemption of the 25 cent rebate per 16-ounce can far exceed the expectations of the rebate issuer, which further exacerbate the problems associated with the rebating.

Please replace the paragraph (or section) beginning at page 16, line 11, with the following redlined paragraph (or section):

Depicted is that first manufacturer rebate list 206 contains a list of rebates offered by the first manufacturer, where each rebate is keyed to a specific "generic shopping list category-subcategory." The "generic shopping list category-subcategory" to which each individual rebate is keyed is one of a set of generic shopping list categories and subcategories defined by Web server software 202 (e.g., see Figure 27, wherein are illustrated the generic shopping list categories of Produce, Canned Goods, Dairy Products, and Drinks, with which are respectively associated the generic shopping list subcategories of Apples, Tomatoes, Green Beans, Milk, Eggs, Wine, Beer, etc.), which in one embodiment the Web server software

owner/operator can define, add to, and change substantially at will. As will be described below, vendors (e.g., manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers, etc.) will have secure access (e.g., via security techniques such as user IdsIDs, encryption, passwords, etc.) to their respective rebate lists where such secure access will allow the vendors to change such vendors' respective rebate lists, and it will typically be the vendors (e.g., manufacturers) who determine into which generic shopping list category or categories their respective rebates will fall and who will input their own (the vendors') rebates into the system. This scheme relieves the owner/operator of Web server software 202 of much labor and constitutes one of the benefits of various embodiments of the present invention described herein, in that it essentially relieves the Web server owner/operator of any concerns related to the internal inventories of various manufacturers. While the foregoing is the preferred method for the vendors' rebates to be matched with the generic shopping list categories and subcategories, in another embodiment the owner/operator of web server software 202 will do the matching for vendors for an agreed upon fee.

Please replace the paragraph (or section) beginning at page 28, line 19, with the following redlined paragraph (or section):

The occurrences shown in Figure 7 substantially track the occurrences described in relation to Figure 6, up to and including messaging 610. However, shown in Figure 7 is that in addition to the occurrences described in relation to Figure 6, in response to messaging 610, Web server software 202, residing on and running in central computer system 150: (a) recalls the value of a single first manufacturer's soap coupon from the first manufacturer coupon list; (b) logs the type of coupon, time and date of redemption of the coupon (e.g., 1440 hours on 21 May 2000, and value of the coupon (25 cents) at the time and date of redemption; and (c) thereafter, via messaging 700 informs coupon reimbursement application program 606 of the value of the first manufacturer's soap coupon at the time and date of redemption and that the redemption transaction has been logged. Thereafter, coupon reimbursement application program 606 passes the value of the coupon to software to first retailer computer system 120 which thereafter applies the coupon against the manufacturer's soup soap purchased by a user in a fashion well-known to those having ordinary skill in the art. With respect to the value of the rebate, in one embodiment, the value is that contained on the bar code itself, while in another embodiment, the value is

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obtained from the first manufacturer coupon list (as shown in Figure 7) in near real time. There are various ways in which the requisite information could be encoded, but in one embodiment, the barcode contains fields (a) identifying the barcode as originating from Web server software 202 (or the owner thereof), (b) defining the generic shopping list category and subcategory associated with the item, (c) identifying the vendor offering the rebated item, (d) identifying the specific vendor's item upon which the rebate is being offered, and (e) defining a default rebate value for use in case Web server software 202 is for some reason inaccessible. In addition, when the vendor scanning the barcode interacts with multi-vendor rebate list 204, such vendor also typically sends a code with its query identifying itself so that Web server software 202 can determine who has scanned in the rebate vehicle. However, those skilled in the art will recognize that the foregoing techniques of identification are merely exemplary and that many, like techniques exist in the art for doing such product/vendor/retailer identification. For example, in one embodiment, the Universal Product Code (UPC) manufacturer field is utilized to identify that the bar code scanned is associated with the owner/operator of Web server software 202, and the remaining product code fields, plus the supplemental codes, are used together with a coding scheme to encode the foregoing described information using techniques familiar to those within the art. In addition, in the event that the UPC is again extended beyond the current supplemental codes, it is envisioned that such codes can also be used within the spirit of the present invention. However, that being said, there is no reason why the embodiments described herein absolutely must use the UPC scheme, and other bar-coded schemes could thus be utilized.

Please replace the paragraph (or section) beginning at page 32, line 29, with the following redlined paragraph (or section):

Method step 1010 illustrates the owner/operator of Web server software 202 billing the specified manufacturer for disbursement to the specified retailer on the basis of the value of coupon transactions per the specified time period (e.g., the fee charged the manufacturer would be on a percentage based on the value of the coupons). Thereafter, shown is that the process proceeds to method step 1014 and stops.